

Icons in the Liturgy*

The martyr St Stephen the Younger, thrown into prison by the Iconoclasts in the late 8th century, sang out in defiance of his captors the troparion τὴν ἄχραντον εἰκόνα σου προσκυνοῦμεν (“we venerate your immaculate icon”).¹ The verse became a refrain in the various services of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the feast celebrating the restoration of icon worship after the end of Iconoclasm in 843.² Proskynesis, or the veneration, of icons had again become legitimate. Walls were repainted, old panels were revived, and new images were developed. Slowly icons became the acknowledged setting for any liturgical service that they are today.³

Any truly thorough study of icons and the liturgy should cast its net very wide. It must take into account not only what occurs inside a church in the way of kissing, censing, lighting, or venerating icons, but also what goes on inside a monastic cell or even a private house; what takes place in a procession, whether it be triumphal or penitential or a routine part of imperial ceremony; or even what occurs on the battlefield, where tents were outfitted as chapels and soldiers

* This paper was presented in roughly its present form in April 1990 at the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium on the Holy Image. Research for the talk was completed shortly before the appearance that spring of the monumental study of Hans Belting, *Bild und Kult. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich, 1990). This paper relies on much of the same visual and textual evidence as that collected by Belting, although it has a somewhat more liturgical bent.

¹ *Vita S. Stephani Junioris*, PG 100, col. 1125A. The vita of St Theodore of Studios says that on one Palm Sunday Theodore ordered the monks to take up icons and go around the monastery enclosure singing this troparion, along with other “triumphal hymns” (PG 99, cols. 185B-C).

² *Triodion Katanyktikon* (Rome, 1879), 224, 226, 240; cf. 125 and 777. Eng. trans: Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware, *The Lenten Triodion* (London-Boston, 1978), 302. The phrase became a form of veneration for a specific image, e.g., V. Grumel, “Léon de Chalcédoine et le canon de la fête du saint Mandylion,” *AnalBol* 68 (1950), 139, 140; cf. E. Follieri, *Initia hymnorum ecclesiae graecae* (Vatican City, 1963), ST 214, IV, 60–61; J. Darrouzès, “Sainte-Sophie de Thessalonique d’après un rituel,” *REB* 34 (1976), 47.27–9; 53.13. Cf. also the μακαρίζομεν troparion discussed in note 81 below.

³ Cf. the numerous references to icons in the 14th-century Diataxis of Philotheos Kokkinos, which, as incorporated into the printed Euchologia, constitutes the standard regulation of ceremonies today, e.g. Εὐχολόγιον τὸ μέγα (Athens, 1927), 1–9.

participated in services on the eve of the fray.⁴ The field of study is vast.

So, too, is the number of written sources that can be brought to bear: from chronicles, homilies, ekphraseis, and poems, to saints' lives and miracle collections.⁵ What these texts don't tell us can often be gleaned from the various *typika* – liturgical and administrative documents that regulated daily life in the monasteries – and from assorted private and church inventories.⁶ The authors of these documents may be interested mainly in establishing what sort of lighting was appropriate for each image or icon in the church (this is the case for the *typika*), or in simply identifying an icon so that it would not be rashly given away (as in the inventories). However, they do provide us [p. 46] with many different terms for icons: *proskynesis* icons, *signa* or *processional icons*, *proskynemata*, etc.;⁷ though their terminology is not

⁴ In the 10th century, at least, the emperor's action before the icons seems to have consisted mainly of veneration or "proskynesis," and the lighting of candles, e.g. *De Ceremoniis*, Bonn ed., I, 553.5–7, 554.16, 21–3. Cf. the *akolouthia* for the imperial bath at Blachernai, A.A. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie liturgiĭeskix rukopisej* (Kiev, 1985; repr. Hildesheim, 1965), II, 1042–52, esp. 1050. Cf. Belting, *Bild und Kult*, 209–15. For the military and triumphal use of icons, cf. A. Frolow, "La dédicace de Constantinople dans la tradition byzantine," *RHR* 127 (1944), 61–127, esp. 102–6. On liturgical practices of the army on campaign, cf. J.-R. Vieillefond, "Les pratiques religieuses dans l'armée byzantine d'après les traités militaires," *REA* 37 (1935), 322–30; A. Pertusi, "Una *akolouthia* militare inedita del X secolo," *Aevum* 22–3 (1948–49), 145–68.

⁵ Many relevant sources can be found in C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453. Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972; repr. Toronto, 1986). Cf. also A. Kazhdan and H. Maguire, "Byzantine Hagiographical Texts as Sources on Art," *DOP* 45 (1991), 1–22.

⁶ The most complete collection is that edited by Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie* (note 4 above). New editions of some texts have been published by the late Paul Gautier in various recent volumes of the *REB*, starting with vol. 32 (1974) (cf. note 7 below). An English translation of all the known monastic *typika*, prepared under the auspices of Dumbarton Oaks, is being prepared for publication by Dr John Thomas.

⁷ Michael Attaleiates: P. Gautier, "La diataxis de Michel Attaliate," *REB* 39 (1981), 89.1192 (*proskynesis* icon). *Typikon* of the Virgin Kécharitomene: idem, "Le *typikon* de la Théotokos Kécharitôménê," *REB* 43 (1985), 109.1596, 113.1670 (*proskynesis* icons). *Typikon* of the Pantokrator monastery: idem, "Le *typikon* du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator," *REB* 32 (1974), 37.158; 39.166, 179; 73.736, 744, 746 (*proskynesis* icons); 73.737, 744, 746 (*signa*). *Typikon* of the Virgin Kosmosoteira: L. Petit, "Typicon du monastère de la Kosmosoteira près d'Aenos (1152)," *IRAIK* 13 (1908), 23.37, 26.33 (*proskynesis* icons). Eustathios of Thessalonike, *La espugnazione di Tessalonica*, ed. S. Kyriakides (Palermo, 1961), 142.14 (*signon*). Heisenberg, "Quellen," (as in note 24 below), 15.11, 19 (*signon*). Testament from the Church of the Virgin at Skoteine: M. Gedeon, "Διαθήκη Μαξίμου μοναχοῦ κτίτορος τῆς ἐν Λυδία μονῆς Κοτινῆς (1247)," *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* 2 (1939), 281 (*proskynesis* icons). *Typikon* of the Monastery of Lips: H. Dehaye, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), 127.3–4 (... τῆς προκειμένης εἰς προσκύνησιν ἁγίας εἰκόνας of the Virgin). Testament for the monastery of St John the Baptist near Docheiariou, Mt Athos: N. Oikonomides, *Actes de Docheiariou* (Paris, 1984), 136.27 (*proskynemata*). Darrouzès, "Sainte-Sophie," 49.52, 63; 55.73 (*proskynemata*). B. Laourdas, *Συμῶν Θεσσαλονίκης ἀκριβῆς διάταξις τῆς ἐορτῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου, Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 39 (1956), 330.85, 332.131–3 (*proskynemata*). Inventory of the Eleousa monastery: L. Petit, "Le monastère de Notre-Dame de Pitié en Macédoine," *IRAIK* 6 (1900), 119.7–9, cf. p. 131 (*presbeia* and *proskynesis* icons). For *proskynemata* see also N. Oikonomides, "The Holy Icon as an Asset," *DOP* 45 (1991), 41.

always consistent, there is no lack of material to work with.⁸

It is when we start to ask just what constitutes the liturgical use of an icon that the trouble begins. When does a simple prayer become a liturgical rite, and to what extent does the censuring of an icon, for example, constitute its use in the liturgy? Veneration of icons is one thing, their integration into the liturgy another, and the latter may have proceeded at a slower rate than one might be inclined to assume. For the purposes of this study, then, “liturgical use” will be defined very narrowly, as what takes place in a regularly repeated and definable office, celebrated in common by a church or monastic congregation, normally under the leadership of professionals – members of the clergy or monks. However narrow the scope of the enquiry, the approach will at least serve as a test case.

I. Visual Evidence

Leaving the written sources aside for the present, I turn first to the visual evidence, so as to make the distinction between liturgical and non- or para-liturgical use somewhat clearer. What pictures are there of icons actually in use, and which can tell us most about the role they play in the liturgy?

The first example is a familiar image, the return to Constantinople of Emperor John Tzimiskes after his victory over the Rus’ and the Bulgarians in 971: instead of mounting the triumphal chariot himself, he set a captured icon of the Virgin on it, and rode behind on a white horse.⁹ The texts themselves do not say what type of icon this was; the 12th-century miniaturist of the illustrated Madrid manuscript of the chronicle of Skylitzes shows a very large icon of the Virgin and Child of the type now called the Eleousa – probably, but not surely, an anachronism on the part

Gautier translates the term *signon* as “banner” (properly a *semeion*), but passages referring to the large movable Hodegetria icon as a “signon” or “hieron signon” in three roughly contemporary 12th-early 13th-century texts cited above (the Pantokrator typikon, Eustathios of Thessalonike, and the Heisenberg text) justify our translating it as “processional icon.” Cf. D. Pallas, “Le ciborium hexagonale de Saint-Démétrios de Thessalonique,” *Zograf* 10 (1979), 50–51. On the “signon tes presbeias,” cf. pp. 24, 30–39 and note 46 below.

⁸ For further information regarding icons, their settings and coverings, see A. Frolov, “La ‘Podea’, un tissu décoratif de l’église byzantine,” *Byzantion* 13 (1938), 461–504, esp. 468–70, 477; Pallas, “Ciborium,” 44–58; V. Nunn, “The Encheirion as Adjunct to the Icon in the Middle Byzantine Period,” *BMGS* 10 (1986), 73–102; Belting, *Bild und Kult*, 259–78, and index, s.v. *Ikone*.

⁹ The event is described in Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn (Berlin-New York, 1973), 310.54–62, and in Leo Diakonos, *Historia*, Bonn ed., 158.10–14; Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, Bonn ed., III, 535–6.

of the artist (**Fig. 1**).¹⁰ Various later emperors did much the same thing,¹¹ and were sure to involve the clergy. When Michael VIII Palaiologos entered Constantinople in 1261 to restore Byzantine imperial rule after the Latin occupation, he also followed an icon, that of the Virgin Hodegetria, walking behind it, barefoot.¹² But although large and famous icons were displayed and even the clergy may have been present, we should not speak of “liturgical use” of icons, since in such cases there is no definable service involved.

The same holds true for the image found in another illustrated chronicle, a 14th-century [p. 47] Slavic version of the works of Constantine Manasses in the Vatican Library.¹³ Emperor Herakleios is shown bowing before an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria which rests on a stand under a little ciborium (**Fig. 2**). A light hangs over it. At the right is depicted Herakleios’ departure on a military campaign – that of 626, during which the leaderless city was besieged by the Avars and Slavs and saved by the Virgin.¹⁴ There are other stories of emperors visiting famous shrines and venerating icons before leaving the city – the caesar Bardas went to the Hodegon monastery in 866, and Tzimiskes to St Sophia and Blachernai about a century later¹⁵ – but again we do not know what types of prayers were used, and whether their pleas were incorporated into any formal ritual.¹⁶

There are two images of public processions involving specific icons of the Virgin Hodegetria: a later 13th-century fresco in the Vlacherna monastery near Arta, and a textile dated 1498 in Moscow (**Figs. 3–4**: cf. note 24 below). There are also images of a more private veneration of icons, for example, those in the Hamilton Psalter, a bilingual Latin-Greek manuscript of ca. 1300 in Berlin (**Fig. 5**),¹⁷ and in a page

¹⁰ Madrid, Bibl. Nac. vitr. 26.2, fol. 172v; A. Grabar and M. Manoussacas, *L’illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Madrid* (Venice, 1979), fig. 221. On the Eleousa, cf. A. Grabar, “Les images de la Vierge de tendresse,” *Zograf* 6 (1975), 25–30; M. Tatić-Djurić, “Eléousa. A la recherche du type iconographique,” *JÖB* 25 (1976), 259–67; N. Thierry, “La Vierge de tendresse à l’époque macédonienne,” *Zograf* 10 (1979), 59–70. The phrasing of the passage in Leo the Deacon (note 9 above) suggests an icon of the Virgin and Child.

¹¹ e.g. John II Komnenos and Manuel I: Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, Bonn ed., 26.13–23; 204.20–206.12.

¹² George Akropolites, *Annales*, 196.13–197.20; Nicephorus Gregoras, *Historiae Byzantinae*, Bonn ed., I, p. 87.14–20; George Pachymeres, *De Michaelē et Andronico Palaeologis*, Bonn ed., I, 160.5–161.3.

¹³ Vat. slav 2, fol. 122v. I. Dujčev, *Miniaturite na Manasievata letopis* (Sofia, 1962), fig. 43.

¹⁴ Cf. pp. 13–16 and note 28 below.

¹⁵ Theophanes Continuatus, Bonn ed., 204.10–15; Leo Diakonos, *Historia*, 129.4–9.

¹⁶ Cf. Frolow, “Dédicace,” (above, note 4), 99–101.

¹⁷ Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett 78A9, fol. 39v: I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976), 45–8, fig. 16 (with earlier bibliography); on the manuscript in general, cf. C. Havice, “The Marginal Miniatures in the Hamilton Psalter (Kupferstichkabinett 78.A.9),” *JbBM* 26 (1984), 79–142.



Fig. 1. Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Bibl. Nac., vitr. 26.2, fol. 172v). Emperor John I Tzimiskes entering Constantinople (photo: Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid)

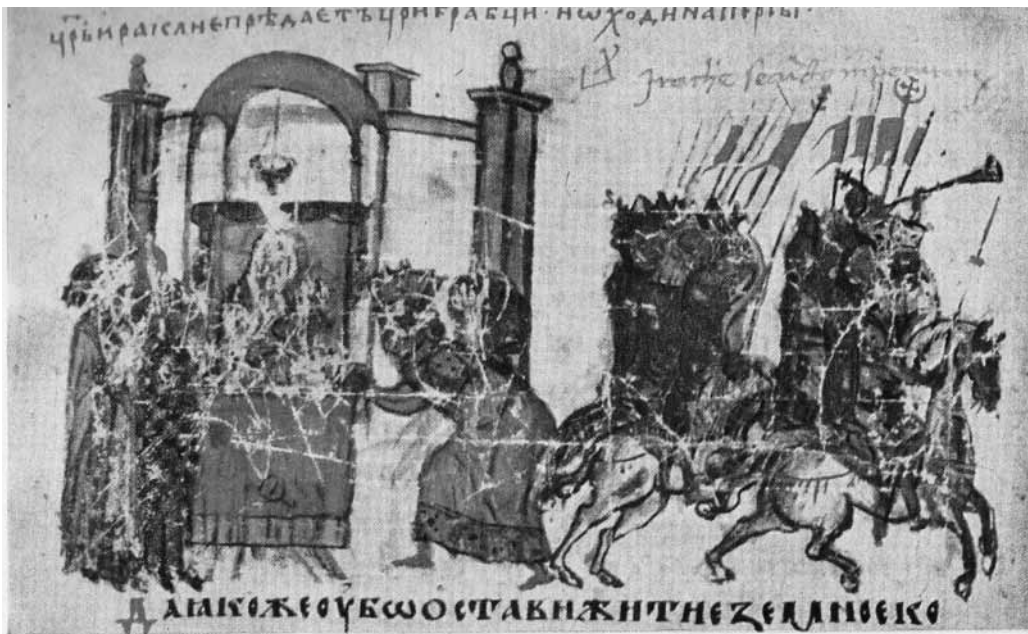


Fig. 2. Vatican Manasses (Vat. slav. 2, fol. 122v). Emperor Herakleios before an icon of the Virgin (after Dujčev, *Miniaturite*, fig. 43)

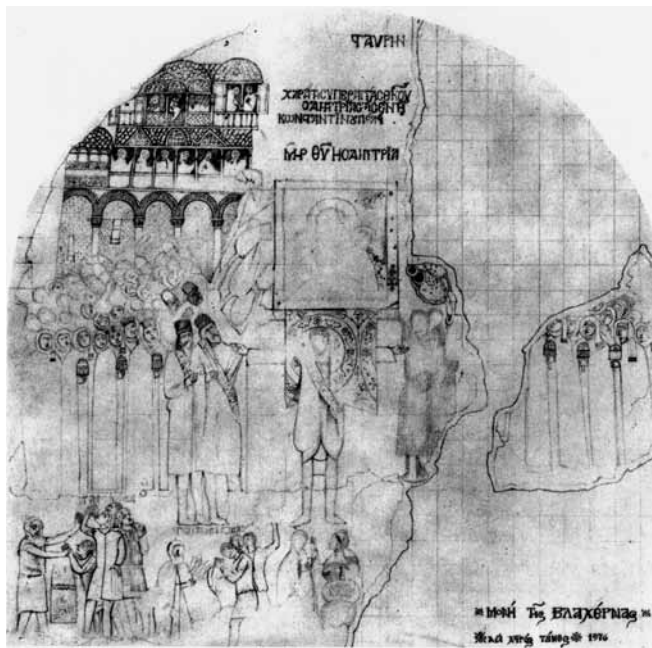


Fig. 3. Vlacherna monastery, near Arta, narthex. Fresco of the procession of the Virgin Hodegetria in Constantinople (sketch, after Belting, *Bild und Kult*, fig. 111)



Fig. 4. Moscow, State Historical Museum. Textile (after Majasova, *Drevnerusskoe Šite*, no. 27)



Fig. 5. Hamilton Psalter (Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett 78 A 9, fol. 39v). Veneration of an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria (photo: Jörg Anders)



Fig. 6. Benaki Psalter (Athens, Benaki Museum, cod. Προθήκη 34,3, fol. 194r). Veneration of an icon of the Virgin "Nikopoios" (photo: Benaki Museum, Athens)

inserted into a Greek psalter in the Benaki Museum in Athens (**Fig. 6**).¹⁸ These show what are presumably families gathered around a large icon, one being the Hodegetria, the other identified as the Virgin Nikopoios. The large scale and elaborate setting of the Hamilton Psalter image reflects what we know of the setting of the “original” or “real” Hodegetria in Constantinople, though such a shrine could surely have housed an important icon elsewhere as well. The families here are engaged in a private type of proskynesis, with no clergy in view, which makes it difficult to determine what particular service may be taking place. These images belong in the grey area between the liturgical and the private use of icons.

A 15th-century icon in the Byzantine Museum in Athens is somewhat closer to representing a liturgical service as I have defined it (**Fig. 7**).¹⁹ It again features the Hodegetria, this time in a rather odd setting – attending the funeral of an unidentified but haloed monk, whose fellow monks are making their laborious way down the hillsides to participate in the rites. The vignettes of eremitic life which make up the composition are culled from the *Apophthegmata Patrum* and other early monastic texts; the landscape setting as a whole is a common mode of representing the death of a monk, especially the early Syrian monks such as St Ephrem.²⁰ The huge icon of the Virgin, however, is an anomaly for which I know of no parallel. Other contemporary death scenes, and we have many, such as that of St Nicholas at his church in Thessalonike, or of Archbishop Arsenius at Peć, do not include icons, so it cannot be argued on the basis of this image that an icon was a regular element of funeral ceremonies.²¹ This must be a special case, with the icon brought into the composition to indicate the identity of the monk or of his monastery, perhaps the

¹⁸ Benaki cod. Προθήκη 34,3, fol. 194r. A. Cutler and A. Weyl Carr, “The Psalter Benaki 34:3. An Unpublished Illuminated Manuscript from the Family 2400,” *REB* 34 (1976), 281–323, esp. 285–6. A.W. Carr, *Byzantine Illumination, 1150–1250: The Study of a Provincial Tradition* (Chicago-London, 1987), no. 2.

¹⁹ Βυζαντινὸ καὶ Χριστιανικὸ Μουσεῖο Ἀθηνῶν. Κατάλογος. Ἔκθεσις γιὰ τὰ ἑκατὸ χρόνια τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας (1884–1984) (Athens, 1984), no. 15.

²⁰ J.R. Martin, “The Death of Ephraim in Byzantine and Early Italian Painting,” *ArtB* 33 (1951), 217–25; idem, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus* (Princeton, 1954), 124–7.

²¹ A. Xyngopoulos, *Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ ἁγίου Νικολάου Ὁρφανοῦ Θεσσαλονίκης* (Athens, 1964), fig. 116. N.P. Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art* (Turin, 1983), 134–42. V. Djurić, “Istorijske kompozicije u srpskom slikarstvu srednjega veka i njihove književne paralele,” *ZRVI* 11 (1968), 99–114 (Fr. summary pp. 124–6).



Fig. 7. Athens, Byzantine Museum, icon of the death of St Ephrem.

Hodegon itself, which was in fact in the hands of Syrian monks for much of the 14th century.²²

On another icon, the late 14th-century Sunday of Orthodoxy icon in the British Museum, a feast of the church is illustrated in the traditional Byzantine way. The appropriate figures are in attendance, regardless of chronology: Emperor Michael III [p. 48] and his mother, Theodora, on the left, Theodora having been present at the first celebration of the feast at Blachernai on 11 March, 843; Patriarch Methodius, who presumably instituted the feast and wrote a canon for it, on the right; and earlier heroes and a heroine of the Iconoclast controversy lined up underneath, along with a bunch of other lesser known or unidentified figures (Fig. 8).²³

The center of this composition is, appropriately for the occasion, an icon, once again that of the Virgin Hodegetria, carried by her traditional bearers, the brotherhood clad in red who bore the icon to its varied destinations around the

²² The monastery was given by emperor Andronikos II (1282–1328) as a metochion to the patriarch of Antioch: Pachymeres, II, 122; cf. R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. I. Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique. III. Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), 201; V. Laurent, "Le patriarche d'Antioche Cyrille II. (29 Juin 1287-c. 1308)," *AnalBoll* 68 (1950), 310–17.

An inscription on the icon reads ὁ ἅγιος Ἰσίδωρος. If the caption is contemporary with the painting (and this is not entirely clear), the icon could represent the death of St Isidore of Pelousion. The presence of the Virgin icon, however, cannot be explained by any text of his life (cf. BHG 2209).

²³ Other figures include Sts Theodosia, Theodore of Studios, Theophanes the Confessor, Theodore Graptos, and a Theodore, Theophilos and Thessakios identified by inscriptions. R. Cormack, "The Triumph of Orthodoxy," *National Art Collections Fund Review* 1989, 93–4; idem, "Icons in the Life of Byzantium," *Icon* (Baltimore, 1982), 33; Y. Petsopoulos, *East Christian Art* (exhib. cat., London, 1987), no. 43. There is a 16th-century icon of this feast in Venice, M. Chatzidakis, *Icones de Saint-Georges des Grecs* (Venice, 1962), no. 63, and an early 17th-century one in the Benaki Museum in Athens, N. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting* (Leiden, 1986), fig. 87.

The feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy is regularly celebrated the first Sunday of Lent, cf. J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie," *TM* 2 (1967), esp. 129–38; M. Arranz, "Les 'fêtes théologiques' du calendrier byzantin," in *La liturgie, expression de la foi*, eds A.M. Triacca and A. Pistoia, *Biblioteca Ephemerides Liturgicae, subsidia* 16 (Rome, 1979), esp. 39–41. For the readings for the feast, cf. BHG 1386–1394t.

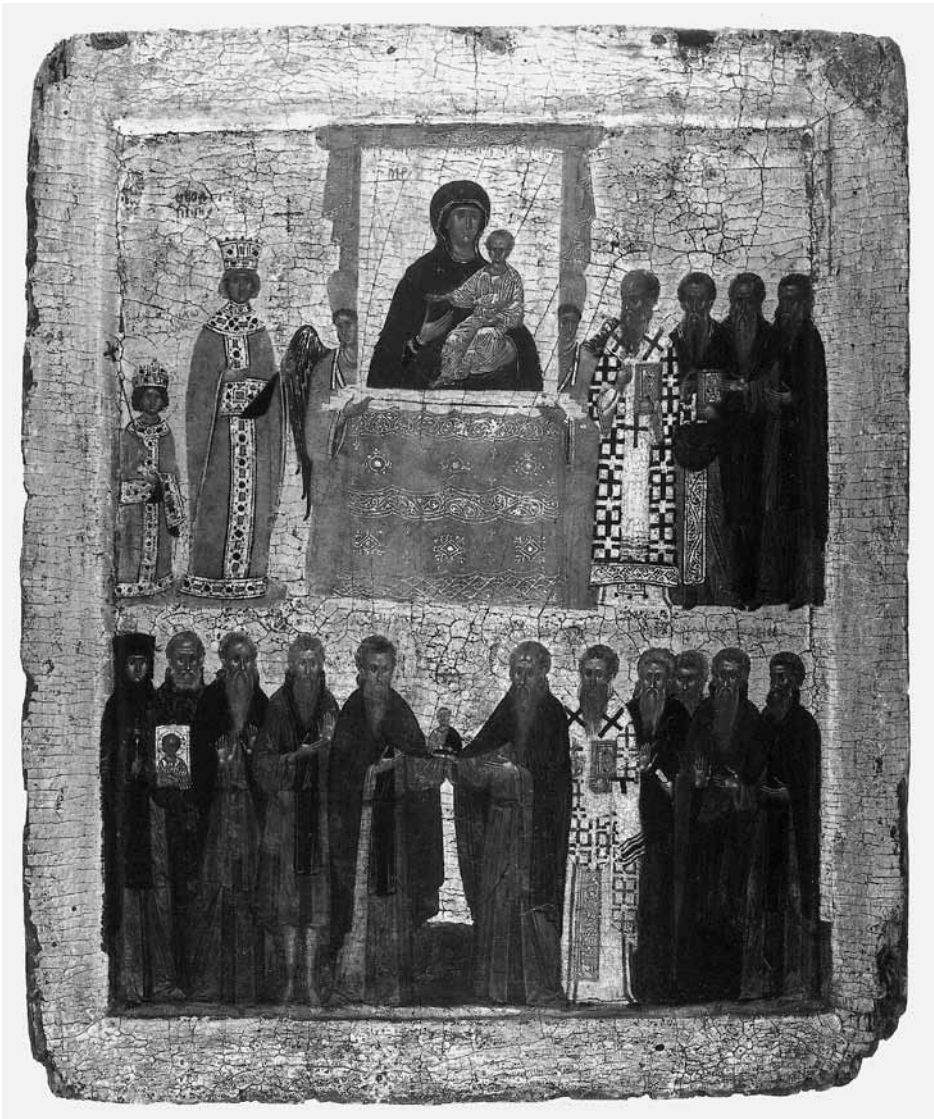


Fig. 8. London, British Museum. National Icon Collection, no. 18. Icon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy (photo: courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)

city.²⁴ Though their presence confirms that the icon represented is *the* Hodegetria, the fact that they are given angel wings, like the angel deacons in scenes of the Divine Liturgy, elevates them and the feast to a “heavenly” or “liturgical” level. The image thus celebrates simultaneously, as does any christological feast, the historical event, its inner meaning, and its eternal reenactment.

Here surely the content of the feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy would be enough to warrant including the icon in the image of the feast. Yet that the icon portrayed is that of the Hodegetria, not of Christ, as we might expect, tends to confirm what we know from a few contemporary textual sources: that icons were involved in the feast’s annual celebration as well.²⁵

²⁴ Janin, *Églises*, 203–6. The icon of the Hodegetria was carried out into the city streets every Tuesday in a public procession, at least as early as the 11th century, cf. E. von Dobschütz, “Maria Romaia. Zwei unbekannte Texte,” *BZ* 12 (1903), 202.3–10. This passage, which purports to be about the 9th century, appears in a manuscript (Paris, B.N. gr. 1474) dated to the 11th century by von Dobschütz (p. 193); the procession of the Hodegetria is here already being called a venerable tradition. Cf. also A. Heisenberg, “Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des lateinischen Kaisertums und der Kirchenunion,” *SBMunch* (1923), pt. 2, pp. 4, 16.11–16; R.L. Wolff, “Footnote to an Incident of the Latin Occupation of Constantinople: The Church and the Icon of the Hodegetria,” *Traditio* 6 (1948), 319–28. The public ceremonies and the dress of the bearers are described in various pilgrim reports, cf. Janin, loc. cit. and G.P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1984), 36–7, 362–6; cf. also 138–9, 160–61, 182–3. There are depictions of a procession involving the Hodegetria in a late 13th (?) century fresco in the Vlacherna monastery near Arta, and on a textile dated 1498 in the Historical Museum in Moscow. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, “The Byzantine Wall Paintings of Vlacherna Monastery (Area of Arta),” *Actes du XVe congrès international d’études byzantines, Athènes – Septembre 1976*, II (Athens, 1981), 1–14, esp. 4–14. N. Majasova, *Drevnerusskoe Šite* (Moscow, 1971), no. 27 (where this is interpreted as the Palm Sunday procession); A.N. Svirin, *Drevnerusskoe Šite* (Moscow, 1963), 52–7; Moran, *Singers*, 130–31, fig. 85.

Similar ceremonies apparently took place in Thessalonike as well, where in the 12th century an icon of the Hodegetria was also regularly borne around the city by a brotherhood of attendants; the fact that this icon at one point refused to return to her sanctuary (“oikos”) was thought to presage the imminent fall of the city to the Norman besiegers in 1185, Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Espugnazione*, 142.3–21; Eng. trans. J.R. Melville Jones, *Eustathios of Thessalonike. The Capture of Thessalonike* (Canberra, 1988), 143. On other icons attended by such lay brotherhoods, cf. J. Nesbitt and J. Wiita, “A Confraternity of the Comnenian Era,” *BZ* 68 (1975), 360–84. Cf. also note 72 below.

The Constantinopolitan icon of the Hodegetria had also certain *annual* visits to make: to the Pantokrator monastery overnight for the imperial memorial commemorations (see note 54 below), and to the imperial palace for over a week at Eastertime, Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux (Paris, 1966), 228.1–3 and n. 1; 231.1–12.

On the activities of the Hodegetria, cf. Belting, *Bild und Kult*, 87–91; I. Zervou Tognazzi, “L’iconografia e la ‘vita’ delle miracolose icone della Theotokos brefokratoussa: Blachernitissa e Odighitria,” *BollGrott* 40 (1986), 215–87.

²⁵ The icon of the late 13th-century patriarch Athanasios was to be brought from the monastery where he was buried to Hagia Sophia on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, Philotheos, *Tomos synodicus II contra Prochorum Cydonium*, PG 151, col. 712A, cf. A.-M. M. Talbot, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium* (Brookline, Mass., 1983), 26. A procession of holy images took place in Thessalonike on this day during the 14th

II. The Akathistos Frescoes

We move closer still to the representation of an actual liturgical ceremony in two images from Markov Manastir, near Skopje, of ca. 1380 (**Figs. 9–10**).²⁶ Located on the north wall of the bema, these two adjoining frescoes illustrate the two final strophes of the Akathistos Hymn, which extends as a cycle around the four walls of the church almost as though around the walls of the city whose deliverance it celebrates. The final image (**Fig. 10**) shows the by now familiar icon of the Virgin Hodegetria [**p. 49**], here placed on a mobile stand, balanced by a young attendant, with a choir of psaltai in their spectacular robes on the left, and the patriarch with his double cross censuring the image on the right, along with various deacons. There are two children in the foreground, one a reader, the other a kandelaptes, or “candle-lighter.” The boys hold a book and a candle respectively.

This fresco, too, can be read on more than one level, as a depiction of the institution of the feast of the Akathistos – that is, a reenactment of the original events – and as a representation of its annual celebration.²⁷ The story behind the Akathistos is as follows: during the siege of Constantinople by the Avars and Slavs in 626 while Herakleios was absent from the city, Patriarch Sergios I organized a procession and went around the walls with an (unidentified) acheiropoietos image; the ensuing raising of the siege was attributed to the direct intervention of the Virgin on the ramparts, and Sergios conducted a ceremony of thanksgiving in the

century; it went from the church of St Demetrios to that of Hagia Sophia, where the liturgy was celebrated, Darrouzès, “Notes d’histoire,” 239.

²⁶ A. Pätzold, *Der Akathistos-Hymnos: Die Bilderzyklen in der byzantinischen Wandmalerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1989), 15–16 (with discussion of the date), 40–43, figs. 70, 84, 112–14 and plans 24–9. Moran, *Singers*, pl. VIII (in color), and pp. 107–8. V. Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslawien* (Munich, 1976), 119–24 (with further bibliography).

²⁷ For interpretations of this composition and of the one illustrating the previous strophe, cf. Pätzold, *Akathistos-Hymnos*, 55–76, 91–99; T. Velmans, “Création et structure du cycle iconographique de l’Acathiste,” *Actes du XIV congrès international des études byzantines* (Bucharest, 1976), III, 469–73; eadem, “Une illustration inédite de l’Acathiste et l’iconographie des hymnes liturgiques à Byzance,” *CahArch* 22 (1972), 131–65; G. Babić, “L’iconographie constantinopolitaine de l’Akathiste de la Vierge à Cozia,” *ZRVI* 14–15 (1973), 173–89, esp. 178, 186–8; A. Grabar, “L’Hodigitria et l’Eléousa,” *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* 10 (1974), 3–14; idem, “Une source d’inspiration de l’iconographie byzantine tardive: Les cérémonies du culte de la Vierge,” *CahArch* 25 (1976), 143–62, esp. 143–7; Zervou Tognazzi, “Theotokos brefokratousa,” 277–82; Moran, *Singers*, 93–114. Cf. also N. Scheffer, “The Akathistos of the Holy Virgin in Russian Art,” *GBA* 29 (1946), 5–10.

We know that the feast of the Akathistos was celebrated in the 14th century with an agrypnia in the palace, which the emperor did not attend in person (Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité*, 230.23–33); the icon of the Hodegetria, housed in the palace during this period, was set up somewhere near that of the Virgin Nikopoios (ibid., 228.1–3; 221.1–12). Cf. J. Myslivec, “Ikonoğrafie Akathistu Panny Marie,” *SemKond* 5 (1932), 97–130.



Fig. 9. Markov Manastir, bema. Fresco of the Akathistos Hymn, strophe 23 (photo: Jadranka Prolović)

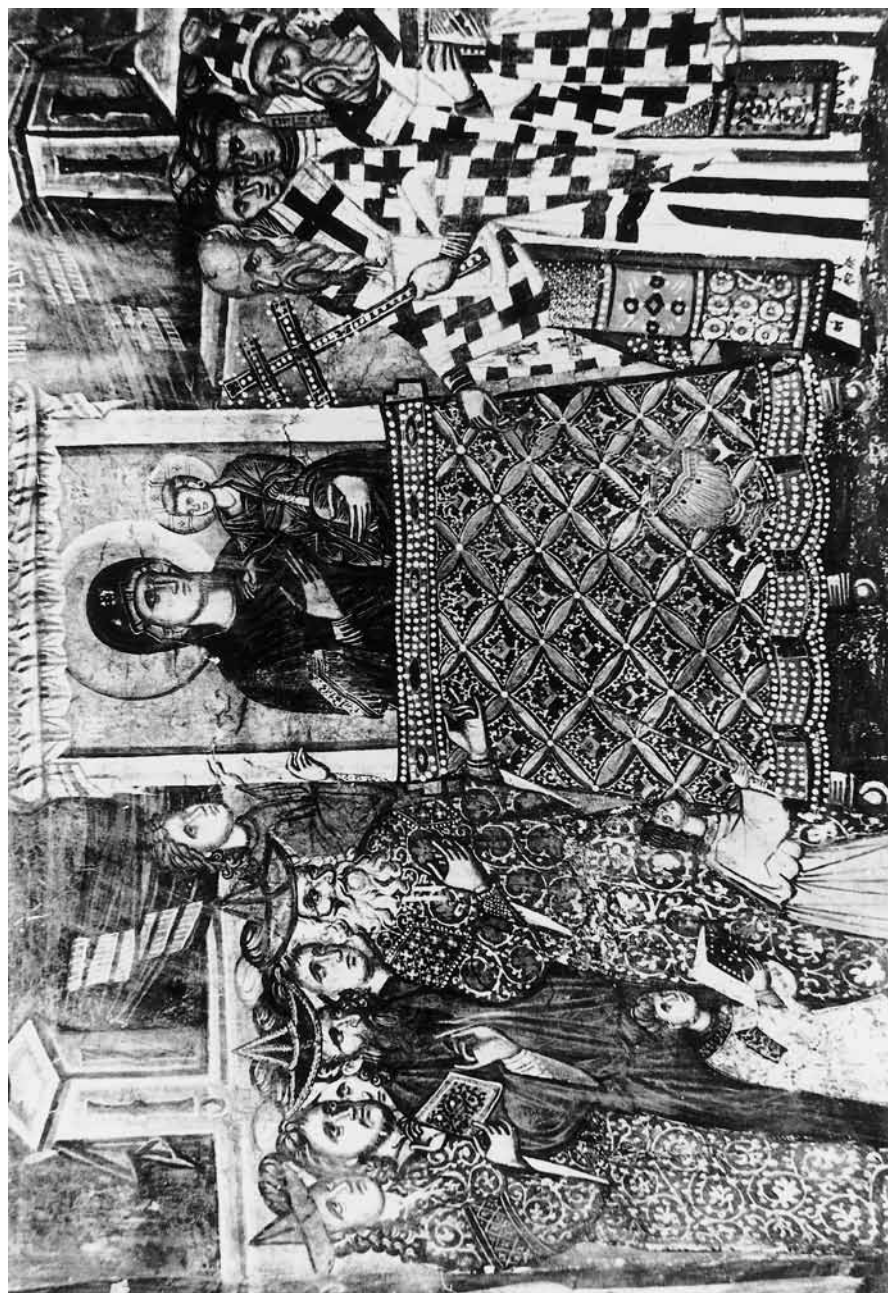


Fig. 10. Markov Manastir, bema. Fresco of the Akathistos Hymn, strophe 24 (photo: Jadranka Prolović)

evening at Blachernai.²⁸ The hymn on that occasion was a well-known kontakion to the Virgin, usually sung at the feast of the Annunciation.²⁹ Sergios is said to have added to the older text some preliminary verses (prooimion 2) that made reference to the recent events: "To thee, our leader in battle and defender, O Theotokos, I thy city, delivered from calamity, offer hymns of victory and thanksgiving. Since thou art invincible in power, set me free from every peril, that I may cry to thee: Hail, Bride without bridegroom."³⁰ This prooimion became a regular part of the singing of the Akathistos hymn. An icon of the Virgin (along with other relics) was carried around the walls at subsequent sieges, and in later times, it was assumed that the icon in question had always been that of the Hodegetria.³¹

²⁸ The main account is attributed to Theodore Synkellos, ed. L. Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica* (Cracow, 1900), esp. 24.10–15, repr. with Fr. trans. in F. Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie écrite probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le siège de Constantinople en 626* (Szeged, 1975), esp. 46, 96. Cf. also S. Szádeczky-Kardoss, T. Dér and T. Olajos, "Breviarium Homiliae Theodori Syncelli De Obsidione avarica Constantinopolis," *AnalBoll* 108 (1990), 147–82. Cf. Frolow, "La dédicace" (note 4 above), 93–7; Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* (Aug. 1979), repr. in her *Continuity and Change in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (London, 1981), 3–35, esp. 5–6, 20–22.

²⁹ *Triodion*, 506–16 (for Akathistos Saturday); Eng. trans. in *The Lenten Triodion*, 422–37. The Akathistos hymn is attributed by many modern scholars to Romanos the Melodist: cf., among others, J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance* (Paris, 1977), 32–6; E. Wellesz, *The Akathistos Hymn*, Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae Transcripta 9 (Copenhagen, 1957), xx–xxxiii, with an edition of the text pp. lxxiii–lxxx; Martínez, *El Himno* (note 80 below), 55–61; Pätzold, *Akathistos-Hymnos*, 3–8. It has also been proposed that the hymn may in fact have been composed for a feast other than that of the Annunciation, perhaps a Virgin feast celebrated the day after Christmas.

³⁰ Wellesz, *Akathistos*, lxviii. The translation is that found in *The Lenten Triodion*, 422. It is by no means sure that it was Sergios who wrote the prooimion; Patriarch Germanos has also been proposed as its author, with the occasion being the retreat of the Arabs, who lifted their siege of the city on 24 March, 719. Cf. E. Wellesz, "The 'Akathistos': A Study in Byzantine Hymnography," *DOP* 9–10 (1956), 143–74, esp. 147, 152; Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos*, 34.

³¹ On the complicated question of just what images or relics were taken around the walls in 626, and whether they did or did not include an icon of the Virgin, cf. J.L. van Dieten, *Geschichte der Patriarchen von Sergios I. bis Johannes VI. (610–715)* (Amsterdam, 1972), Excursus I, 174–8. In a text incorporated into the Menologion of Symeon Metaphrastes (PG 92, col. 1356D), and in a 12th century manuscript of the Synaxarion (H. Delehay, *Synaxarium CP*, 873.47–9), the icon used in the siege of 626 is described as an icon of the Virgin holding the Child. Nikephoros Kallistos, writing in the 14th century, reports that the icon brought out at the time of the siege of 717 was the Hodegetria (PG 92, col. 1352).

A miniature accompanying the Akathistos narrative in an 11th century manuscript of the Metaphrastian Menologion (Messina, Bibl. Univ., San Salvatore 27, fol. 202r) already takes the form of an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria (here a "dexiokratousa," as is the icon depicted in the Akathistos miniature in the Serbian Psalter, cf. note 35 below), N.P. Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion* (Chicago, 1990), 77. This would indicate the connection of the icon with that of the Hodegetria is at least as old as the 11th century.

Isaac Angelos took the icon of the Hodegetria around the walls of the city in 1186 (Niketas Choniates, 496–7).

This composition, as we find it at Markov Manastir, appears frequently in painted Akathistos cycles of this period, usually, but not always, illustrating the final strophe, 24.³² At Dečani, the famous [p. 50] bearers of the Hodegetria icon are included with their red headcoverings (Fig. 11).³³ At Mateić, from the mid 14th century, the icon is again shown resting on a wheeled stand (Fig. 12).³⁴ The scene appears in manuscripts as well: in Moscow 429, an Akathistos manuscript of the mid-14th century written probably in the Hodegon monastery in Constantinople (Fig. 13), in the somewhat later Serbian psalter in Munich (Fig. 14), and in the Tomić Psalter in Moscow (Fig. 15).³⁵ All these manuscripts close the Akathistos cycle with this composition.

However, at Markov Monastir the illustration of strophe 23 also includes an icon, and there are some other curious details (Fig. 9): the emperor is present, there are monks as well as singers and bishops around, and a deacon holds a katsi, a censer used at memorial services. Furthermore, the icon is not that of the Hodegetria, but of the type we call Eleousa, and it is on the move, supported by a bare-headed man who seems to carry it on his back.³⁶ None of these has anything to do with the original thanksgiving ceremony. Here we are certainly even closer to the depiction of an actual service, and quite clearly a large processional icon is involved. But which service is it? For this we need to look into the history of the Akathistos.

The thanksgiving service of 626 did not immediately become an annual celebration. The famous early sieges of the city were for quite some time celebrated

³² Pätzold, *Akathistos-Hymnos*, 40–42, 54–5. In addition to the monuments studied by Pätzold, there are fresco cycles at Cozia in Romania, Babić, “Cozia” (note 27 above) and in the church of the Birth of the Virgin in the Ferapontov monastery in Russia (dated 1502). I. Danilova, *Freski Ferapontova monastyrija* (Moscow, 1970), plan II and plates 33 and passim.

³³ Pätzold, *Akathistos-Hymnos*, figs. 50a–b, and p. 13. Here the icon is flanked by members of the Serbian royal family (Dušan, his wife Helena, and their son Uroš). Cf. the discussion of strophe 23, below, p. 26.

³⁴ Pätzold, *Akathistos-Hymnos*, figs. 76a–b, and p. 14.

³⁵ Moscow Akathistos: Moscow, Historical Museum, gr. 429, fol. 33v: G. Proxorov, “A Codicological Analysis of the Illuminated *Akathistos* to the Virgin (Moscow, State Historical Museum, *Synodal gr.* 429),” *DOP* 26 (1972), 239–52, and “Illuminirovannyi grečeski Akafist Bogorodice,” *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo* (Moscow, 1977), 153–74. Proxorov associates the manuscript with Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos, and with the scribe Joasaph, and dates it to ca. 1355–63; Moran (*Singers*, 97–102) dates the manuscript after 1364. Cf. also V. Lixačeva, “The Illuminated Greek Manuscript of the *Akathistos* Hymn (Moscow, State Historical Museum, *Synodal gr.* 429),” *DOP* 26 (1972), 255–62; cf. eadem, *Byzantine Miniature* (Moscow, 1977) pls. 45–9; A. Bank and O. Popova, *Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobraniakh SSSR* (Moscow, 1977), no. 990. Serbian Psalter: Munich, Staatsbibliothek cod. slav. 4, fol. 222v, *Der Serbische Psalter* (facsimile and Textband) (Wiesbaden, 1978–83). Tomić Psalter: Moscow, Historical Museum, Muz. 2752, fol. 296v, M.B. Ščepkina, *Bolgarskaja miniatura XIV veka. Issledovanie Psaltyri Tomića* (Moscow, 1963), pl. XLIII, p. 82.

³⁶ Cf. the pilgrim descriptions of the bearers of the Hodegetria image on her Tuesday procession, cited in note 24 above.

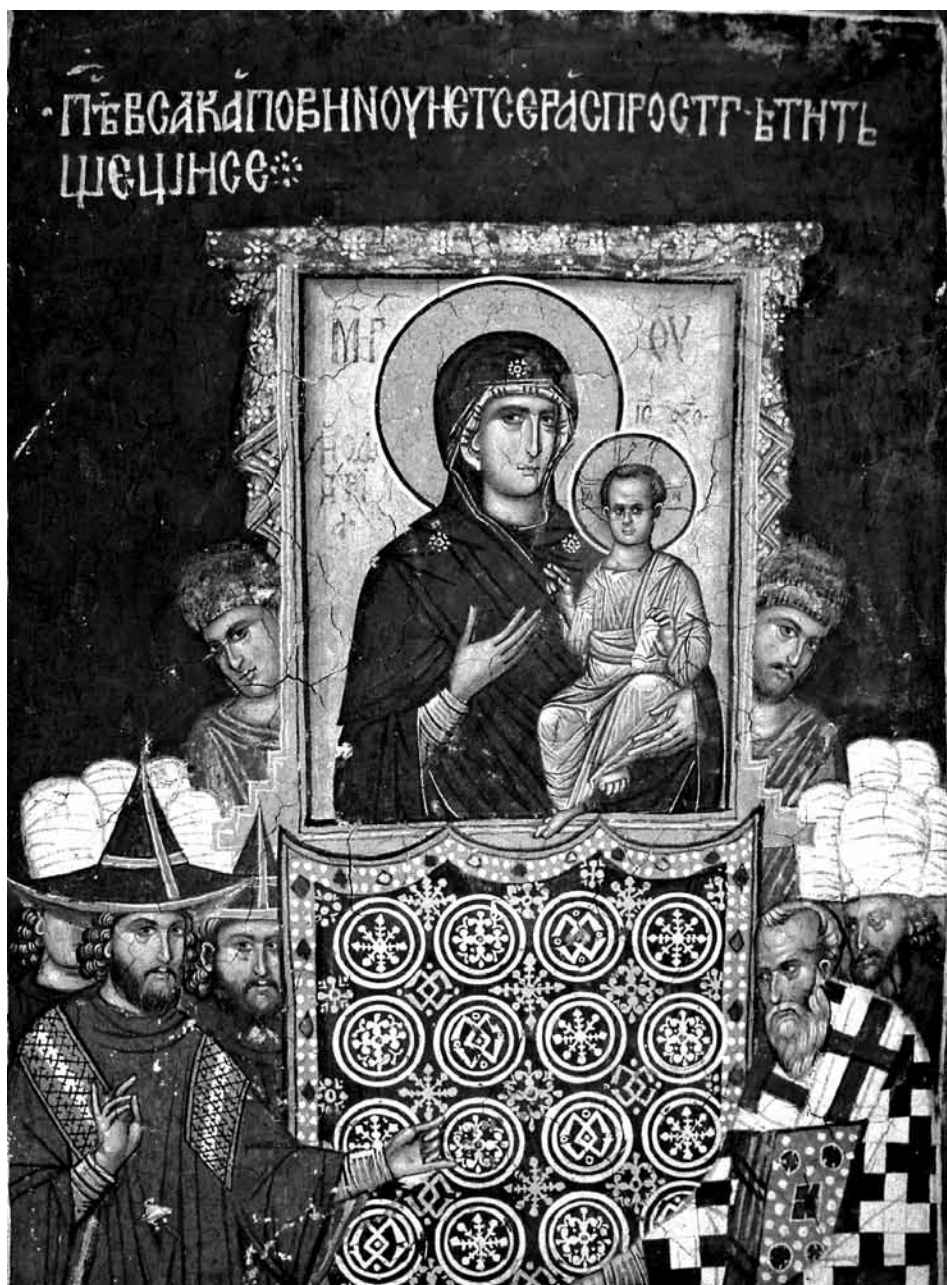


Fig. 11. Dečani. Fresco of the Akathistos Hymn, strophe 20 (photo: Narodni Muzej, Belgrade)



Fig. 12. Mateić. Fresco of the Akathistos Hymn, strophe 24 (photo: Narodni Muzej, Belgrade)



Fig. 13. Moscow, Akathistos (Moscow, State Historical Museum, gr. 429, fol. 33v). Akathistos Hymn, strophe 24 (after Proxorov, "Codicological Analysis," *DOP* 26 [1972], fig. 1)



Fig. 14. Serbian Psalter (Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibliothek, cod. slav 4, fol. 222v). Akathistos Hymn, strophe 24 (photo: Bayer. Staatsbibliothek, Munich)



Fig. 15. Tomič Psalter (Moscow, State Historical Museum, Muz. 2752, fol. 296v). Akathistos Hymn, strophe 24 (after Ščepkina, *Bolgarskaja miniatiura*, pl. LXIII)

independently on separate dates, and the Akathistos hymn was sung, as it had long been, at the feast of the Annunciation on 25 March.³⁷ By the 10th century, however, a feast of the Akathistos had been established, on the fifth Saturday of Lent. On the Friday night before the feast, there was a vigil (*pannychis*), that included a procession from St Sophia to Blachernai and the singing of the hymn at Blachernai. Orthros or matins took place elsewhere, at the Holy Soros chapel at the church of the Virgin Chalkoprateia.³⁸ Readings were introduced, which eventually combined the various stories of the three sieges into a single narrative.³⁹

³⁷ In the Synaxarion, four sieges of the city were celebrated: the siege of 619 on 5 June, *Synaxarium CP*, 729.30–731.5; the siege of 677 on 25 June, *ibid.*, 772.8–16; the siege of 626, celebrated at Blachernai on 7 August, *ibid.*, 869.49–876.3; the siege of 717–18 on 16 August, *ibid.*, 901.30–904.27, cf. 895.46–897.45.

³⁸ J. Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, II, OCA 166 (Rome, 1963), 53.20–54.24. In the late 9th–10th century Patmos manuscript of this typikon, the date of the feast is not yet fixed, and it can be celebrated either on the fifth or on the sixth Saturday of Lent, at the discretion of the patriarch (*ibid.*, 53, note 2). Cf. the Typikon of the Great Church in an 11th-century manuscript in Dresden, M. Arranz, “Les prières presbytérales de la ‘Pannychis’ de l’ancien Euchologe byzantin et le ‘Panikhida’ des défunts,” *OCP* 40 (1974), 337. The procession returns to St Sophia: orthros is at the Chalkoprateia: A. Dmitrievskij, *Drevnjejšie patriaršie tipikony* (Kiev, 1907), 197–201.

³⁹ A text (BHG 1060) describing the events of the siege of 626 was incorporated by Symeon Metaphrastes into the ninth volume (February to April) of his Menologion, as the “logos” or sermon to be read on the feast of the Akathistos (PG 92, col. 1353D–1372; cf. A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und*

III. The Presbeia

None of this sheds particular light on the fresco. Perhaps we should look more closely into the ceremony into which the Akathistos was inserted when the feast was set up. What had been happening on [p. 51] that Friday night before the institution of the feast?

It has been recently determined by Michel van Esbroeck that a procession and services in honor of the Virgin had been going on every Friday night in Constantinople since the 6th century.⁴⁰ Initiated by Patriarch Timothy I (511–18), a procession wound its way across the city from Blachernai to the Chalkoprateia, in imitation of one that moved every Friday from Holy Sion to Gethsemane in Jerusalem. It is evident that the Akathistos feast was simply inserted into this preexistent ritual celebrating the Virgin on Friday night and Saturday morning in her two most important sanctuaries in Constantinople.

For a while we hear only indirectly about these Friday celebrations.⁴¹ The famous “miracle habituel,” for example, took place during regular Friday evening services at Blachernai: according to Michael Psellos, a large procession of clergy and the people regularly gathered outside the church on Friday evenings, and as the doors opened and the people surged into the church, a veil covering an icon of the Virgin miraculously lifted, and it was actually possible, says Psellos, to see the icon change

Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche, II [Leipzig, 1938], 593–4). Cf. note 31 above. Another text (BHG 1063), attributed to Nikephoros Kallistos, describes the sieges of 626, 674–8 and 717–18; this was incorporated into the *Triodion* (PG 92, cols. 1348–53). From at least as early as the 11th century, the hymn was interwoven in various ways with both a canon and the sermon; at the Evergetis monastery, for example, the order of the service was as follows: Prooimion 1, sermon on the Akathistos part 1, odes 1–6 of the canon to the Virgin by Joseph the hymnographer (PG 105, cols. 1020–28), prooimion 2, strophes 1–4 of the Akathistos, prooimion 2, strophes 5–8 of the Akathistos, prooimion 2, strophes 9–12 of the Akathistos, prooimion 2, strophes 13–16 of the Akathistos, prooimion 2, strophes 17–20 of the Akathistos, prooimion 2, strophes 21–4 of the Akathistos, prooimion 2, sermon on the Akathistos part 2, odes 7–9 of the canon by Joseph (Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, I, 537).

⁴⁰ “Le culte de la Vierge de Jérusalem à Constantinople aux 6e-7e siècles,” *REB* 46 (1988), 181–90. Saturdays were dedicated to the Virgin; these services at Blachernai were a form of vigil in preparation for that day. Cf. J. Papadopoulos, *Les palais et les églises des Blachernes* (Thessalonike, 1928), esp. 46–48.

⁴¹ A passage in the life of St Thomas of Lesbos speaks of the all-night hymnody in honor of the Virgin at Blachernai which ends at the Holy Soros, though the day of the week is not specified, *ActaSS, Nov.*, IV, 237D and cf. 243F. In the Life of St Stephen the Younger, Stephen’s mother goes to the regular Friday evening service at Blachernai (called here a late-night *doxologike agrypnia*), and during the service prays for a child, addressing the image of the Virgin and Child (PG 100, cols. 1076A–B). When she rouses from her vision, she finds the agrypnia drawing to a close. The procession to the Chalkoprateia is not mentioned.

as the Virgin herself entered into it.⁴² The veil stayed up until the ninth hour on Saturday.

Anna Comnena relates how alarming it could be if it was perceived that this miracle failed to take place: this occurred when her father Alexios I was leaving on a campaign against Bohemond on a certain Friday in November 1107. Alexios nevertheless departed, but, after reaching a place called Geranion, he stayed there fretting for four days, and then turned back to the capital and attended the hymnody at Blachernai; this time, to his relief, the miracle did take place.⁴³ In view of what we know of this service, it seems likely that what actually happened was that Alexios, who is said to have departed from Constantinople on a Friday and scarcely would have started his journey at night, must simply have left town too early to attend the nightly service. Returning to the capital meant he could attend the same service, and secure the blessing of the Virgin for his campaign, a week later.

These various accounts reveal that the Friday night Virgin celebrations at Blachernai were well established, that they were attended on occasion by the emperor, and that they regularly involved an icon. We are perhaps getting a little closer to understanding the fresco at Markov Manastir.

Other 12th-century sources give us some more specific information. Kedrenos, for example, speaks of a “*lite* called *presbeia* performed every Friday at Blachernai and concluded at the Chalkoprateia.”⁴⁴ He is clearly referring to the same set of services, but now gives it a name: *presbeia*, a term evidently derived from a *kathisma* addressing the Virgin as *πρεσβεία θερμή, καὶ τείχος ἀπροσμάχητον*.⁴⁵ Details of the *presbeia* procession are revealed in the *Typikon* of the Pantokrator monastery of 1136, while its liturgical aspects can be gleaned from a virtually contemporary liturgical *typikon* for another monastery, that of S. Salvatore in Messina of 1131.⁴⁶

⁴² Λόγος ἐπὶ τὸ ἐν Βλαχέρναις γεγονότι θαύματι, ed. J. Bidez, *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*, VI (Brussels, 1928), 192–210, esp. 194.29–196.2. A new edition of this text is being prepared for Teubner by Elizabeth Fisher, who very kindly allowed me to consult her revised version. V. Grumel, “Le ‘miracle habituel’ de Notre-Dame des Blachernes à Constantinople,” *EO* 30 (1931), 129–46; Papadopoulos, *Blachernes*, 31–7.

⁴³ Anna Comnena, *Alexiade*, ed. Leib, III, 87.15–23.

⁴⁴ ...τυποὶ δὲ καὶ τὴν λιτὴν καλουμένην πρεσβείαν κατὰ παρασκευὴν ἐν Βλαχέρναις τελεῖσθαι καὶ ἐν τοῖς Χαλκοπρατείοις: George Kedrenos, *Historiarum Compendium*, Bonn ed., I, 694.21–3. Kedrenos attributes the institution of this *lite* to the Emperor Maurice.

⁴⁵ Follieri, *Initia*, s.v. *presbeia therme* (vol. III, 350). The *kathisma* is used only in the service of the *mikros parakletikos kanon* (see below, p. 29), and in that of the Euchelaion.

⁴⁶ Gautier, “Pantokrator,” (note 7 above), 75.750–78; 77.789–811. M. Arranz, *Le Typikon du monastère du Saint-Sauveur à Messine*, OCA 185 (Rome, 1969), 210.24–211.27; cf. xlix. It is stated in the latter *typikon* that the *presbeia* service is to replace *apodeipnon* (compline) every Friday.

Arranz has noted similarities between the *presbeia* and the “*pannychis*” in honor of Theodore Stratelates described in the 11th century *Typikon* manuscript, Dresden A 104; he calls this kind of service a “monastic *pannychis*,” M. Arranz, “*Pannychis*,” *OCP* 40 (1974), 336–7, 342–3; 41 (1975), 119–24. In the Messina *typikon* the service is actually called a *presbeia*, in the Pantokrator *typikon*

The presbeia is important because it is within the framework of this service that the Akathistos celebrations were incorporated.⁴⁷ [p. 52]

The Pantokrator monastery still exists in Constantinople (Figs. 16-17).⁴⁸ There were three adjoining sanctuaries in the complex. To the north was a regular church dedicated to the Virgin Eleousa: this was open to the public and served by secular clergy.⁴⁹ To the south was a monastery church dedicated to the Pantokrator, served exclusively by the monks.⁵⁰ Between the two churches was the “heroon,” the imperial mausoleum, dedicated to the Archangel Michael, containing the tombs of the founders, John II and Irene, and assorted other members of the Comnenian family. The mausoleum was served either by the secular clergy, or by both monks and clergy together, depending on the occasion.⁵¹ The association and interaction of these three realms is important.

Every Friday evening a grand ceremony took place, which John II describes in his typikon.⁵² A procession consisting of all the clergy and choirs of the Eleousa church, the townspeople, an icon called the “signon tes presbeias” as well as other icons (including other signa), made its way toward the church; the icon of the presbeia was invoked on the road by the clergy before everyone went into the church. Once indoors, the icons were taken on a tour of the tombs in the central chapel, and various litanies were performed by the clergy, and the people too, for the souls of the dead (the people who attended were paid for taking part in these memorials). The appeal *Kyrie eleison* was to be repeated fifteen times before each signon, that is, before each large icon in the procession. Afterwards, says the text, the procession moved on to the Holy Soros.⁵³

The presbeia can only have been a version of the venerable service in honor of the Virgin which had been regularly moving every Friday from Blachernai to Chalkoprateia for hundreds of years. John was apparently both diverting this to his monastic establishment and introducing a new element, a memorial service for the

merely an “agrypnia with pannychis,” though the icon used in the procession is referred to as the “signon tes presbeias.”

⁴⁷ Arranz, *Typikon*, 223.24–224.21; idem, “Pannychis,” *OCP* 40 (1974), 337; 41 (1975), 123. The Evergetis typikon requires the Akathistos to be sung at the 4th hour of the night, in conjunction with orthros, Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, I, 537.

⁴⁸ T.F. Mathews, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey* (University Park, Pa., 1976), 71–101 (with earlier bibliography).

⁴⁹ Gautier, “Pantokrator,” 73.728–81.859.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 31.45–47.290.

⁵¹ Ibid., 81.860–83.904.

⁵² The procession must have looked like the Hodegetria procession seen in Figs. 3 and 4. Cf. note 24 above.

⁵³ Gautier, “Pantokrator,” 77.795–811; cf. 75.750–54.



Fig. 16. Istanbul, Pantokrator monastery, the three churches from the northeast (photo: Image Collections and Field Archives, Dumbarton Oaks)

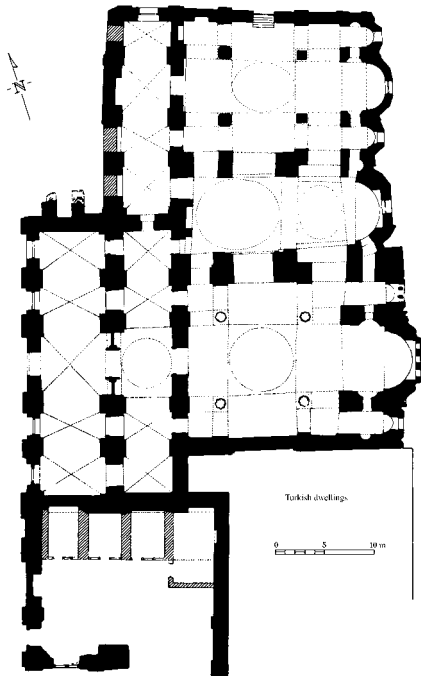


Fig. 17. Istanbul, Pantokrator monastery, ground plan (after Mathews, *Byzantine Churches*, p. 74)

dead: he ordered the huge signa, or processional icons, to be brought right up to the tombs.⁵⁴

Something like this Friday night presbeia service may be represented in the first fresco at Markov Manastir. Such a hypothesis would explain the presence of the singers, the monks and the clergy, the emperor, the katsi for censoring tombs, the icon bearer, and even perhaps the icon of the Eleousa. This is the first among all the examples cited here that can be said to represent icons in use at a definable, and regular, liturgical ceremony.

The weekly memorial introduced by John had not previously been part of the Friday Virgin celebration; it does not come, as does the procession itself,⁵⁵ from the old *asmatike akolouthia* or cathedral liturgy of Constantinople, but directly from the monastic tradition instead. For in monasteries Friday night was the time for a special commemoration of the dead, and it often included visits to the cemetery containing the tombs of the dead brothers and sisters.⁵⁶ The memorial service was usually attached to *apodeipnon* (compline), the last monastic hour of the day, known as the eleventh hour.⁵⁷ One poetic element of this eleventh-hour service was a special kind of canon called a *parakletikos kanon*, a supplicatory canon, characterized by fervent, first-person appeals to the Virgin and other saints to intercede with Christ on behalf of an individual troubled by sin, despair and fear of death.⁵⁸ [p. 53]

⁵⁴ This *weekly* service should not be confused with the *yearly* commemorations of the founders, for which John requests that the icon of the Hodegetria be brought from its monastery to his tomb chamber; it was to stay in the heroon overnight, near his tomb, Gautier, "Pantokrator," 81.883–83.900. The icon was to be brought in again for the memorial services of his wife, and for those of his son, should he choose eventually to be buried there.

⁵⁵ The procession derives from that of the sung (*asmatike*) pannychis, the old Constantinopolitan vigil on the eve of major feasts, in which the patriarch, all the metropolitans, archbishops and bishops of the city, all the clergy of St Sophia and of all the other churches in the city, and all the monks took part (cf., for example, the description of the procession from St Sophia to Blachernai on the eve of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, *De Cer.*, Bonn ed., I, 156.19–157.6). Cf. M. Arranz, "N.D. Uspensky: The Office of the All-Night Vigil in the Greek and in the Russian Church," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 24 (1980), 83–113, 169–95, a translation of M. Arranz, "L'office de la veillée nocturne dans l'Église grecque et dans l'Église russe," *OCP* 42 (1976), 117–55, 402–25, esp. 151–4, which is itself a summary of Uspensky's work later published as "Čin vsenoščnogo bdenija na pravoslavnom Vostok i v Russkoi cerkvi," in *Bogoslovskie trudy* 18 (1978), 5–117 and 19 (1978), 3–69. Cf. also J.F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy*, OCA 228 (Rome, 1987), 205–26.

⁵⁶ Gautier, "Kecharitimene" (note 7 above), 117.1746–48; idem, "Pantokrator," 107.1335–36; Oikonomides, *Docheiariou*, 136.25–26; Arranz, "Pannychis," *OCP* 41 (1975), 121.

⁵⁷ On apodeipnon, cf. A. Raes, "Les complies dans les rites orientaux," *OCP* 17 (1951), 133–45. On apodeipnon in the 15th century, cf. Symeon of Thessalonike, PG 155, col. 620–21.

⁵⁸ Manuscripts prescribing that a *parakletikos kanon* be sung at apodeipnon date at least as early as the 12th century (e.g. Paris, B.N. gr. 370 and gr. 354). It is probably the canon already referred to in the 11th century Evergetis typikon as an essential part of the nightly "parakletike pannychis" which follows either vespers, P. Gautier, "Le Typikon de la Théotokos Évergétis," *REB* 40 (1982),

The service called *presbeia*, as it developed at the Pantokrator, is thus a hybrid service, combining elements of the old cathedral liturgy of the Great Church of Constantinople with all its processions and pageantry, banners and icons, with the sober monastic practices concentrated around supplications of the eleventh hour. The Pantokrator monastery itself is a paradigm for these liturgical developments: in its architecture and liturgy, with the church at one end, the monastery *katholikon* at the other, and the tombs in the middle, it shows the cross-fertilization that resulted from the interaction of neighboring religious establishments within Constantinople.⁵⁹

77.1093–1102, or *apodeipnon* (during Lent), Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, I, 516, 604, etc. Cf. also the *Typikon* of Sabbas of Serbia, where it appears in the context of *mesonyktikon*, Ph. Meyer, *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athosklöster* (Leipzig, 1894), 186.24–27.

The *parakletikos kanon* has not so far been studied as a special genre of canon, *pace* E. Follieri, “Giovanni Mauropode, metropolita di Eucaita. Otto canoni paracletici a N.S. Gesù Cristo,” *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 5 (Rome, 1967), 22, 41 (repr. separately). Some canons of this genre dedicated to the Virgin can be found in the *Theotokarion*, a book of Virgin canons once attributed to John of Damascus: S. Eustratiades, Θεοτοκάριον, I (Chennevières-sur-Marne, 1931); P.A. Rocchi, “In paracleticam Deiparae Sanctissimae S. Joanni Damasceno vulgo tributam animadversiones,” *Bessarione*, year 7 ser. 2, vol. 3 (1902), 22–32, 194–210, esp. 23–4, 30. Cf. also E. Follieri, “Un Theotokarion Marciano del sec. XIV (*cod. Marciano cl. I, 6*),” *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 3 (Rome, 1962), 37–228 (also repr. separately), canons nos. II, IV, V, XII (with Ital. trans.); S. Winkley, “A Bodleian Theotokarion,” *REB* 31 (1973), 267–73.

Parakletikoi kanones addressed to *saints* remain largely unedited, and it is hard at this stage to place very many of them securely into the Byzantine period. A *parakletikos kanon* to St Nicholas was once ascribed to Nicholas Mystikos; the attribution has been questioned by L.G. Westerink, *Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople. Miscellaneous Writings* (Washington, D.C., 1981), no. 206, pp. 114–26; cf. pp. x, xxi, but it is surely as old as the 12th century, since one of the manuscripts containing this canon dates from 1173. For the few *parakletikoi kanones* addressed to saints that have been published, cf. Follieri, “Otti canoni,” 20–25 (references to hagiographical ones by Mauropus); G. Kremos, Προσκυνητάριον τῆς ἐν τῇ Φωκίδι μονῆς τοῦ ὁσίου Λουκά, I (Athens, 1874), 113–21 (Hosios Loukas); K. Doukakes, Μέγας Συναξαριστὴς πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, February (Athens, 1890), 194–9 (St Charalambos); March (Athens, 1891), 296–9 (St Alexios). A 14th-century manuscript, Vatopedi 1000, preserves a *parakletikos kanon* to St John the Baptist composed by Theoktistos, monk of Stoudios, on behalf of sailors. The 12th-century Messina *typikon* stipulates that a *parakletikos kanon* be sung at *apodeipnon* on the feast of the Forty Martyrs (Arranz, *Typikon*, 126.16), though it is not specified whether the canon in question is addressed to the Martyrs, or to the Virgin. Both L. Petit, in his *Bibliographie des akolouthies grecques* (Brussels, 1926) and S. Lambros in his *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos* (Cambridge, Mass., 1895) (s.v. *kanones, parakletikoi*, though in fact ordinary canons are here included with the *parakletikoi kanones*) cite a number of *parakletikoi kanones* to saints in post-Byzantine manuscripts and printed books. A service book of 1784 contains a *parakletikos kanon* “to be sung to the godly Demetrios, before (ἐνώπιον) his holy icon, when it is brought and set up in the middle of the church, on the day of his feast (ἐν τῇ μνήμῃ αὐτοῦ), A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Βυζαντινὰ Ἀνάλεκτα,” *BZ* 8 (1899), 72.

⁵⁹ On the gradual interweaving of cathedral and monastic practices over the course of the 9th–12th century in the capital, cf. O. Strunk, “The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia,” *DOP* 9–10 (1956), 177–202; M. Arranz, “Les grandes étapes de la liturgie byzantine: Palestine-Byzance-Russie. Essai d’aperçu historique,” *Liturgie de l’église particulière et liturgie de l’église universelle*, Biblioteca Ephemerides Liturgicae, subsidia 7 (Rome, 1976), 43–72, and, most recently, R. Taft, “Mount Athos: A Late Chapter

The hybrid nature of the *presbeia* raises a question: if icons were involved in this service, as they so surely were, is it possible to determine from which of these two traditions, the cathedral or the monastic, they came?

The evidence for the liturgical use of icons in strictly monastic communities of the period is scarce. There is, to be sure, mention of an icon being directly addressed and receiving regularly scheduled prayers in a typikon begun in 1152 for the monastery of the Virgin Kosmosoteira at Bera in Thrace.⁶⁰ The founder of that monastery, Isaac Komnenos, the brother of Emperor John II, requests that the monks of his monastery perform on his behalf a daily evening memorial. He writes out the exact service, and says that it should take place before the icon of the Virgin, with the monks raising their hands to pray for him. "Then they [should] make this recitation: 'O Lady Mother of God, deliver Thy servant who approaches Thee, the founder Isaac, from the punishment to come, by Thy intercession with Thy Son, enfolding Him in Thy immaculate arms'. Then they should say the *presbeia therme* and what follows, while modifying in this way the phrase in the middle: 'And deliver him from *spiritual* danger, as Thou art the sole swift protectress' and one further Theotokion, suitable for [bringing] mercy on my soul. Thereupon they should each of them proceed to their cells to rest".⁶¹ When Isaac had a tomb chamber built for himself, he ordered that the service be [p. 54] held there instead, before the two mosaic icons of the Virgin and Christ which were to be affixed to his tomb.⁶²

However, no other monastic typikon of this period speaks of icons in connection either with apodeipnon or with the evening memorial service, and it appears that Isaac's prescription for the use of an icon on this occasion has its roots not in the monastic tradition, but in the urban churches of Constantinople. The comparable service for his brother, Emperor John II, in the mausoleum of the Pantokrator, it should be remembered, was to be performed not by the monks but by the secular clergy of the Eleousa. Later evidence concerning movable icons only serves to confirm our impression that their use in liturgical services derives more from cathedral than from monastic practice, for the evidence comes exclusively from

in the History of the Byzantine Rite," *DOP* 42 (1988), 179–94. Cf. also idem, "A Tale of Two Cities. The Byzantine Holy Week Triduum as a Paradigm of Liturgical History," in *Time and Community*, ed. J. N. Alexander (Washington, D.C., 1990), 21–41.

⁶⁰ L. Petit, "Kosmosoteira" (note 7 above), 19–75. On the actual church, identified as the Church of the Virgin in the village of Pherrai in Thrace, cf. S. Sinos, *Die Klosterkirche der Kosmosoteira in Bera (Vira)* (Munich, 1985). For some additional information about the church and its furnishings from the evidence of the Typikon, cf. N.P. Ševčenko, "The Tomb of Isaac Komnenos at Pherrai," *GOTR* 29 (1984), 135–9.

⁶¹ Petit, "Kosmosoteira," 22.31–23.9. The brief service comes after vespers, as was the case in the Evergetis typikon on which that of Isaac is based, although in the latter, this so-called "pannychis" is combined with apodeipnon during Lent (Dmitrievskij *Opisanie*, I, 515–16). Cf. Raes, "Complies" (note 57 above), 137–9.

⁶² Petit, "Kosmosoteira," 64.18–21.

Thessalonike, the last place in the empire where the old *asmatike akolouthia* was still being performed.⁶³

The weekly *presbeia*⁶⁴ and the daily version outlined by Isaac Komnenos correspond to what is known today as the *akolouthia*, or order of service, of the *mikros parakletikos kanon*, an office that is not a part of any regular *cursus*, but designed to be used in times of trouble and despair.⁶⁵ In the Russian Church, this office became the *moleben*, again a service of supplication for special occasions.⁶⁶ Both the Russian service and the modern Greek one are directed toward a portable icon, and this is the only service, other than the Akathistos, in which this is the case.

⁶³ Symeon of Thessalonike tried gamely, if vainly, to resurrect the rituals of the old *asmatike akolouthia* in early 15th century Thessalonike. According to Symeon, an icon of the Hodegetria was to be brought out, to the accompaniment of the *Axion esti* troparion, from its “naos” (perhaps the *oikos* of the icon mentioned by Eustathios, cf. note 24 above), to rest near the steps of the ambo in Hagia Sophia during vespers and orthros, Darrouzès, “Sainte-Sophie” (note 2 above), 53.13–16; 59.14–15, 19–21. It was carried in procession from Hagia Sophia to the Acheiropoietos church for vespers on feasts of the Virgin; on the first Monday of Lent, apodeipnon was to be sung before the icon of the Virgin displayed in the naos of the church, J. Darrouzès, “Notes d’histoire des textes. 2. Une oeuvre peu connue de Syméon de Thessalonique († 1429),” *REB* 21 (1963), 238. Cf. I. Phountoules, “Μαρτυρία τοῦ Θεσσαλονίκης Συμεῶν περὶ τῶν ναῶν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης,” *Ἀριστοτελεῖον Πανεπιστήμιον Θεσσαλονίκης. Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς* 21 (1976), 156–7, 168, 175, etc.

Friday night services to the Virgin involving her icon took place at the Acheiropoietos church in Thessalonike in the mid-14th century, as indicated by Constantine Harmenopoulos: D. Gkines, Λόγος ἀνέκδοτος Κωνσταντίνου Ἀρμενοπούλου εἰς τὴν προεόρτιον ἑορτὴν τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου, Ἐπ. Ἐτ. Βυζ. Σπ. 21 (1951), 158.314–28, 333–25; 159.353–55; Pallas, “Ciborium” (note 7 above), 49. Such services could well have been a direct source for the Serbian frescoes discussed above.

⁶⁴ Cf. note 46 above.

⁶⁵ J. Goar, *Εὐχολόγιον* (Venice, 1730, repr. Graz, 1960), 673–7. Arranz, “Pannychis,” *OCP* 41 (1975), 133, 137. Eng. trans. D. Kangelaris and N. Kasemeotes, *The Service of the Small Paraklesis to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Brookline, Mass., 1984). The canon used in the service today is one attributed to the monk Theosterikos or to Theophanes. The service of the Great (*meḡas*) *parakletikos kanon* is virtually identical, except that the canon is different: it is one attributed to the emperor Theodore Laskaris: PG 140, cols. 772–80; Eustratiades, *Θεοτοκάριον*, 39–42. Both *akolouthiai* are included in most modern editions of the Euchologion and of the Horologion.

The two services are performed nowadays in alternation on each of the 14 days preceding the Koimesis of the Virgin on 15 August; this may have been late Byzantine practice as well, as some manuscripts containing the canons of Mark Eugenikos specify that they are to be sung at this time (e.g. Lambros, *Catalogue*, nos. 762, 6370). The 12th-century Messina typikon stipulates a similar alternation: two different *parakletikoi kanones* are to be sung on alternate Fridays. One canon is in the 4th mode (this is the same mode as that of the Theosterikos canon used in the modern *mikros parakletikos kanon* service), the other is in the 4th plagal mode, Arranz, *Typikon*, 211.18–21. In seminaries today, the *mikros parakletikos kanon* service is sung, as was the Byzantine *presbeia*, every Friday evening. I wish to thank Father John Cotsonis for this information, as well as for his kindly and knowledgeable assistance in various other liturgical matters.

⁶⁶ On the *moleben*, cf. Arranz, “Pannychis,” *OCP* 41 (1975), 133, 137.

IV. The Signon Tes Presbeias

Did such a “signon tes presbeias” conform to any specific icon type, comparable to the image of the “mourning” Virgin confronting the Man of Sorrows which Pallas and Belting have proposed was invented for the ceremonies of Good Friday?⁶⁷ There is little evidence to support this hypothesis. The natural choice from our perspective would be the classic image of the supplicating Virgin such as we see on an 11th-century marble relief at Dumbarton Oaks (**Fig.18**), and on a 12th-century icon from the monastery of St Neophytos on Cyprus (where she is called the Eleousa) (**Fig.19**), or the 14th-century mosaic with the portrait of Isaac Komnenos at Chora (**Fig. 20**).⁶⁸ [p. 55] Her pose is directly related to the Virgin of the Deesis and of the Last Judgment, and may be paired with a bust or full-length figure of Christ.

A variant of this Virgin image, labelled in some cases ἡ παράκλησις – which relates it to the *parakletikoi kanones* – would also be an appropriate image. The succinct dialogue between Christ and the Virgin inscribed on the scroll she holds perfectly reflects the message of these supplicatory canons (cf. an early 12th-century icon now in Spoleto [**Fig. 21**] or a fresco at Lagoudera of the late 12th century [**Fig. 22**]).⁶⁹ A large processional icon of this type apparently belonged to the church of the Virgin at Studenica; it was brought out to receive the body of Stefan Nemanja, the first ruler of Serbia, at the time of the translation of his body from Chilandari on Mount Athos in February 1207, as recorded in a fresco in Sopoćani (**Fig. 23**).⁷⁰

⁶⁷ D. Pallas, *Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz*, MiscByzMonac, 2 (Munich, 1965), esp. 31–4, 283–6; H. Belting, “An Image and its Function in the Liturgy: The Man of Sorrows in Byzantium,” *DOP* 34/35 (1981), esp. 7–10; idem, *Bild und Kult*, 258–9. Pallas and Belting are mistaken in viewing the “presbeia” as a new, once-a-year Good Friday ceremony; the Passion and lament themes are just worked into the preexistent presbeia, with the *threnetikos kanon* replacing on this occasion the *parakletikos kanon*. It is therefore not only in connection with the Good Friday ceremonies that icons were integrated into the service.

⁶⁸ The type is usually designated the Virgin Hagiosoritissa, the Holy Soros being the reliquary container which held the Virgin’s belt (*zone*) in the Church of the Virgin Chalkoprateia (and, by extension, the chapel in which the reliquary was housed). M. Andoloro, “Note sui temi iconografici della Deesis et della Hagiosoritissa,” *RLAS*, n.s. 17 (1970), 85–153, esp. 85–92, 118–43. S. Der Nersessian, “Two Images of the Virgin in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection,” *DOP* 14 (1960), 77–81. C. Mango and E.J.W. Hawkins, “The Hermitage of Saint Neophytos and its Wall Paintings,” *DOP* 20 (1966), 160–62, 201–4; C. Walter, “Further Notes on the Deësis. I. The Eleousa Ikon at Saint Neophytos, Cyprus,” *REB* 28 (1970), 162–8. P. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (New York, 1966), I–II, no. 6.

⁶⁹ Der Nersessian, “Two Images,” 81–6. The Virgins at Lagoudera and Asinou (1332/3) are labelled “the Eleousa”; the designation *paraklesis* is not apparently applied to this image before the 14th century: e.g. at St Nicholas Orphanos in Thessalonike, Xyngopoulos, *Τοιχογραφίες*, p. 15; figs. 76, 80, 183. Cf. also C. Walter, “Two Notes on the Deesis,” *REB* 26 (1968), 311–36, esp. 322.

⁷⁰ The fresco is in the south chapel of the inner narthex, Der Nersessian, “Two Images,” fig. 12. The event is illustrated at Studenica as well: D. Winfield, “Four Historical Compositions from the Medieval Kingdom of Serbia,” *BS* 19 (1958), esp. 251–78; Djurić, “Istorijske kompozicije,” *ZRVI* 8.2 (1964), 69–90.



Fig. 18. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. Marble slab of the Virgin (photo: Image Collections and Field Archives, Dumbarton Oaks)

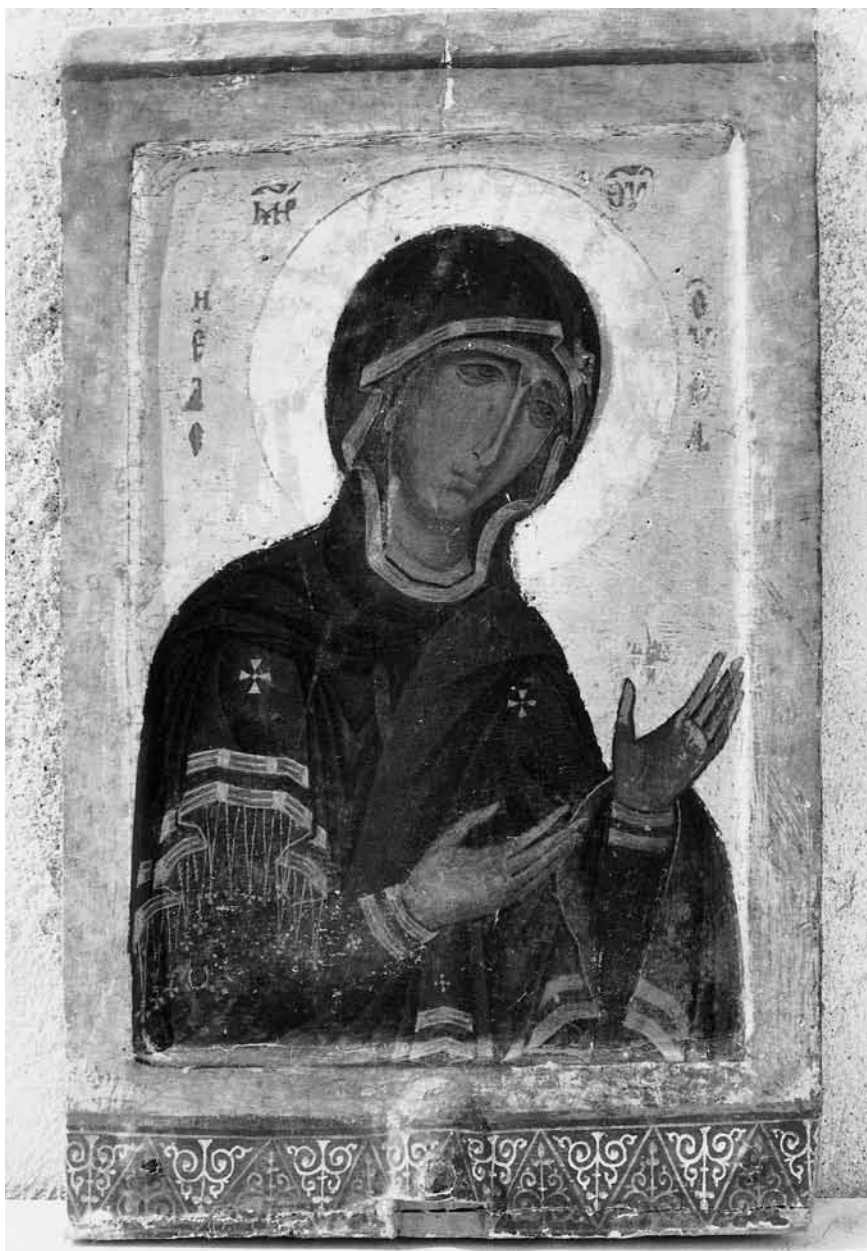


Fig. 19. Paphos, monastery of St Neophytos. Templon icon of the Virgin (photo: Image Collections and Field Archives, Dumbarton Oaks)



Fig. 20. Istanbul, Chora monastery. Deesis mosaic (photo: Image Collections and Field Archives, Dumbarton Oaks)



30681 - SPOLETO - Duomo - SS. Icone - Scuola Bizantina (sec. VI) - (Stab. D. Anderson 1931).

Fig. 21. Spoleto cathedral. Icon of the Virgin (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, N.Y.)



Fig. 22. Lagoudera, Church of the Virgin Arakiotissa. Templon fresco of the Virgin (photo: Image Collections and Field Archives, Dumbarton Oaks)



Fig. 23. Sopoćani, south chapel of inner narthex. Fresco of the translation of the relics of St Symeon Nemanja (photo: D. Tasić)

The formal relation between either of these images and that of the mourning Virgin discussed by Pallas and Belting (Fig. 24) is exactly comparable to the formal relation that exists between the *parakletikoi kanones* and the so-called *threnetikoi kanones*, or lamenting canons, sung on Good Friday at the very same evening hour.⁷¹

Yet the icons used in the *presbeia* were most likely icons of no consistent iconographical type, but simply the large and venerable processional icons of the Virgin or of the title saint, sometimes referred to as *signa*, which were owned by an individual church, attended by a (lay?) brotherhood, and brought out regularly for this evening service.⁷² There do exist *parakletikoi kanones* that address not the

⁷¹ Cf. typikon of the Evergetis monastery, Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, I, 554. S. Janeras, *Le Vendredi-saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine*, Studia Anselmiana 99, Analecta Liturgica 13 (Rome, 1988), 427–28. Pallas, *Passion*, 31.

⁷² In the inventory made probably in 1449 of the possessions of the Eleousa monastery founded in the 11th century, there is reference to a “*presbeia*” icon of the Virgin, set up near the “*proskynesis*” icon of the Virgin Eleousa (Petit, “N.-D. de Pitié” [note 7 above], 119.9). One suspects that this “*presbeia*” icon was the movable one, and that the “*proskynesis*” icon was fixed to the iconostasis.

The lead seal of an official called the *protos tes presbeias* may have belonged to the chief of a brotherhood attached to an icon, rather than to the organizer of the *presbeia* procession, as proposed by V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin, V:2: L'église* (Paris, 1965) nos. 1200 and 1201; cf. pp. 121–2 and nos. 1202–3. The two duties were certainly interconnected. An 11th-century seal of



Fig. 24. Meteora, Metamorphosis monastery. Icon diptych of the Virgin and Christ (photo: Hirmer Fotoarchiv)

Virgin herself⁷³ but a specific Virgin icon: there is a canon addressed to the Virgin Portaitissa, which is an icon of the Hodegetria in the Iviron monastery on Mount Athos (Fig. 25), and a canon to the Virgin Kykkotissa, an icon on Cyprus presumably

John, patrikios and *protos tes presbeias* of Blachernai, bears an image of the suppliant Virgin; the seal of another *protos tes presbeias* of Blachernai has the image of the Hodegetria instead.

The office of the *protos tes presbeias* existed, at least in name, as early as the 10th century; among the miracles which took place at the monastery of the Virgin Pege in Constantinople, there is the story of a certain Stephen Katzator who, after being cured by the Virgin at Pege, became a “servant of the Theotokos” (δοῦλος τῆς Θεοτόκου) and is now πρῶτος τῶν ἀδελφῶν τῆς πρεσβείας, the chief of the brothers (brotherhood?) of the presbeia (icon?), *ActaSS, Nov.*, III, 888C. On the brotherhoods, cf. also Nesbitt and Wiita, “Confraternity” (note 24 above) and N.P. Ševčenko, “Servants of the Holy Icon,” *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton, 1995), 547–53.

⁷³

As do the canons cited in note 58 above.



Fig. 25. Mount Athos, Iviron monastery. The Virgin Portaitissa (after S. Kadas, *Mount Athos* [Athens, 1980], fig. 99)

donated to the Kykko monastery by Alexios I.⁷⁴ Granted, these particular hymns are post-Byzantine, but the form may well be older: eight *parakletikoi kanones* by the early 15th-century author Mark Eugenikos, for example, are addressed to the Virgin Hodegetria, which suggests they too direct their appeal to a particular icon.⁷⁵ The nightly appeal to the Virgin prescribed by Isaac Komnenos does not address an icon directly, but its language does seem to be already affected by a special image, one of the Virgin [p. 56] and Child (“O Lady Mother of God, deliver Thy servant who approaches Thee, the founder Isaac, from the punishment to come, by Thy intercession with Thy Son, *enfolding Him in Thy immaculate arms*” (italics mine; cf. p. 28 above).

Let us return for a moment to the Akathistos. In the early 15th century, Symeon of Thessalonike speaks of the advisability of monks conducting certain services in their cells in private, and especially mentions in this connection apodeipnon with its *parakletikoi kanones*, and the Akathistos.⁷⁶ He offers in this connection the surprising information that the Akathistos is sung in holy monasteries *every* Friday evening.⁷⁷ This statement should indicate two things: first, that the usual supplicatory canons to the Virgin for the individual soul, chanted on Friday nights, were, by the 15th century, being replaced by the Akathistos hymn; and second, that the entire service was moving out of the church into the more private environment of the monastic cell.

The sudden appearance of the Akathistos as a theme of fresco decoration around the year 1300 has never been very well understood.⁷⁸ Its role as part of a regular Friday service, rather than a mere annual celebration, would certainly help

⁷⁴ Canons such as these are usually found published in little local pamphlets, such as those collected by Petit, *Akolouthies*, 84 (Virgin Portaitissa); 164–6 (Virgin Kykkotissa); 166 (Virgin Myroblytissa); 167 (Virgin Myrtidiotissa); 174 (Virgin Prousiotissa); 177 (icon of the Hypapante in Kalamata). Cf. also A. Chappet, “La Vierge Myrtidiotissa à Cérigo, et son office,” *EO* 15 (1912), 138–45. Petit also cites a *parakletikos kanon* addressed to an icon of St George “of the bells” (p. 88). The icons are evidently considered as capable of performing miracles as the Virgin herself. The icon of the Kykotissa and her history will be the subject of a monograph by Annemarie Weyl Carr, whom I wish to thank for innumerable helpful comments and references.

⁷⁵ Lambros, *Catalogue*, no. 6370. The edition of some of his hymns to the Virgin by K. Oikonomos, Ὑμνωδίων ἀνέκδοτα (Athens, 1840), 89–132 is unavailable to me. The Laskaris canon (cf. note 65 above) is addressed to the Virgin *amolyntos* in the Moscow Akathistos manuscript; this too might well be an actual icon.

⁷⁶ PG 155, col. 620C. Already the Evergetis typikon recommended that apodeipnon be recited in private when there is an agrypnia before Sundays and feastdays, cf. Arranz, “Pannyichis,” *OCP* 40 (1974), 121. The *Triodion* stipulates that the apodeipna of Holy Thursday and Good Friday are to be sung privately in the cells, pp. 663 and 709 (cf. note 2 above, and Janeras, *Vendredi-saint*, 427).

⁷⁷ PG 155, col. 621C.

⁷⁸ Pätzold, *Akathistos-Hymnos*, 91–9, connects the cycles with the rise of hesychasm. The earliest Akathistos cycle in fresco is thought to be that of the Olympiotissa at Elasson, ca. 1300: E. C.

explain this popularity. It would also explain why the Akathistos is found in some 14th-century Psalters,⁷⁹ and would make some sense out of the Moscow manuscript of the Akathistos mentioned earlier, which is of modest dimensions, and contains only the Akathistos hymn, the order of service for the Akathistos, a *parakletikos kanon* to the Virgin, and a few other related texts – nothing more.⁸⁰ If the Akathistos were being celebrated only once a year, the *raison d'être* for this little volume might remain a puzzle. If the Akathistos were being sung every Friday night, on the other hand, the Moscow volume could well have served as a personal guide to the service, when conducted in a monastic cell, as Symeon suggests was common in his time.

In virtually every monument I have found that depicts an icon in use, the icon has been a large processional icon of the Virgin. I have concentrated on two of these: the two Akathistos images, since of all the examples, they seem to represent not only an icon in use, and not only the historical occasion of the feast, but the actual service in which the hymn was sung. This was a weekly Friday evening office in honor of the Virgin which in the 12th century involved both a procession with large icons and an evening memorial conducted at the tombs. It was this blending of the two liturgical traditions in Constantinople – the pageantry of the court and cathedral processional liturgy, with the intense personal supplications of the monastic eleventh hour – that led to the introduction of icons into this service. Other images in the church may have been kissed, censed, specially lit, or venerated in many different ways, but these large signa or processional icons were apparently the first to play an indispensable role in a liturgical office.⁸¹

Constantinides, *The Wall Paintings of the Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson in Northern Thessaly*, 2 vols. (Athens 1992).

⁷⁹ The Serbian and Tomić Psalters (note 35 above). On the private use of the Serbian Psalter and of the Moscow Akathistos, cf. the comments of R. Stichel, in *Der Serbische Psalter* (note 35 above), Textband, 176–8 and BZ 71 (1978), 272; Pätzold, *Akathistos-Hymnos*, 8.

⁸⁰ Cf. note 35 above. The canon is the *parakletikos kanon* of Theodore Laskaris, here addressed to the Virgin *amolyntos* (cf. notes 65 and 75 above). The copy of this Moscow manuscript, now in the Escorial (R.I.19), adds to these texts the metaphrasis of the Akathistos by Manuel Philes (B.E.C. Miller, *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, II [Paris, 1857], 317–33), the canon by Joseph the hymnographer (PG 105, cols. 1020–28), the akolouthia of the feast of the Annunciation, and part of a dialogue (unpub.) between the Virgin and Christ, having “Philotheos” as part of the acrostic: G. de Andrés Martínez, *El Himno Akathistos. Primera parte del MS. Esc. R.I.19* (Madrid, 1981), 33–43; Velmans, “Illustration” (note 27 above) esp. 136–52. Both manuscripts are quite small: the Escorial manuscript measures 24.5 x 18.2 cm, the Moscow Akathistos 24 x 17.5 cm.

⁸¹ There are a couple of other segments of the liturgy which may once have involved an icon. One is the reciting of the troparion μακαρίζομέν σε (O martyr, priest, etc.), καὶ τιμῶμεν τὴν ἁγίαν εἰκόνα ὡς ἀντίτυπον τῆς θείας σου μορφῆς, cf. Talbot, *Faith Healing*, 26 (used in the akolouthia of Patriarch Athanasios); Laourdas, “Diataxis” (note 7 above), 332.125 (addressed to the icon of St Demetrios in his church in Thessalonike). Is this the same as the Russian ublažanie, a special veneration of the icon of the feast inserted after the 6th ode? Cf. Arranz, “Veillée” (note 55 above), 420.

That office is no longer in regular use, and the singing of the Akathistos is now essentially reduced [p. 57] to a few Fridays a year.⁸² Today only relatively few icons of this type survive: they are the miracle-working icons such as the Virgin Portaitissa on Athos, still capable of acting as free agents and moving from place to place – to remind us of the great *signa tes presbeias* which used to be brought forward every Friday night to receive and transmit the appeal of the faithful.

In the Tomić Psalter, fol. 226r, the *polyeleos* (Psalms 134–5, sung at orthros) is illustrated by a scene showing an icon of Christ flanked by priests and singers and by a pair of candlesticks, Moran, *Singers*, pl. VII and pp. 86–8. It is after the *polyeleos* that the icon of the feast is venerated in the Greek church today.

⁸² The Akathistos is sung on the first five Fridays of Lent (in sections on the first four Fridays, and in its entirety on the fifth), at apodeipnon, or, according to the *Triodion*, at orthros which begins at the 4th hour of the night (p. 506). It is still preceded by (or interwoven with) a canon to the Virgin by Joseph the hymnographer, as was stipulated in the Evergetis typikon (cf. note 39 above). It is also used as a separate votive office, to be sung whenever the need arises, like the *mikros parakletikos kanon*. I wish to thank Fr. Robert Taft, S.J. for this information, and for reviewing this study – though he should in no way be held responsible for any errors in liturgical matters which it contains.